



# ***News Release***

## **PRESS OFFICE**

---

**Connecticut District Office**  
330 Main Street 2<sup>nd</sup>. Floor  
Hartford, CT 06106-1800  
Tel. (860) 240-4700  
Website: [www.sba.gov/ct](http://www.sba.gov/ct)

**Contact: Debra Dillon**  
**Public Affairs Specialist**  
**Tel: (860) 240-4654**  
**Fax: (860) 240-4659**  
**Email: [Debra.Dillon@sba.gov](mailto:Debra.Dillon@sba.gov)**

---

**Release Date:** For Immediate Release

**Release Number:** 2007- 06

## **ENTREPRENEURS RECEIVE SBA RECOGNITION FOR EXCELLENCE**

**HARTFORD, CT** – The Connecticut District Office of the U. S. Small Business Administration (SBA) announced today the 2007 Small Business Champions. This recognition is made in conjunction with the annual National Small Business Week event, which will take place this year on April 23-24, 2007, at the Ronald Reagan International Trade Center in Washington, D.C. During this event, more than 100 business owners from around the country will be honored. Connecticut's small business Champions represent a wide range of business experience and expertise, and they have devoted their professional and personal lives to improving the small business environment.

“The SBA Champion awards honor the best small business has to offer, and Connecticut's recipients are an outstanding choice,” said District Director Bernard M. Sweeney. “I join my SBA colleagues in congratulating them on their significant achievements.” This year's recipients are:

**Thomas S. Bednarczyk**, President/Owner **SilverLining Partners LLC**, Naugatuck, CT chosen as the **2007 Veteran Small Business Champion of the Year** for the New England Region and Connecticut. Mr. Bednarczyk is founder and owner of SilverLining Partners, a technology consulting business. Mr. Bednarczyk has served on the committee of the Small Business Administrations Advisory Committee on Veteran Affairs since 2004 and is currently the Vice President. The Committee, a volunteer group of veteran representatives from across the US, are responsible for reviewing the current state of veteran small business affairs and offering advice and policy to the Administrator of the SBA, the Associate Administrator for Veterans Business Development of the SBA, the Congress, the President and other United States policymakers. Mr. Bednarczyk is also the Vice President for Veteran Activities within the Northeast Veteran Owned Business Network (NVOBN). NVOBN is a veteran organization made up of Veteran and Disabled Veteran Small Businesses within the geographical region from Maine to Pennsylvania. NVOBN is a resource for government agencies, prime contractors and private-sector companies providing a one-stop shop to fulfill contract diversity requirements and to look for quality Service Disabled Veteran and Veteran-owned businesses to fulfill sub-contracting needs. Mr. Bednarczyk actively supports legislation for regulatory action designed to help small businesses. Recently he planted the seed for the pilot program, VET BIZ NOW!, launched in the Greater New Haven area. Mr. Bednarczyk is involved in numerous other activities to improve awareness among veterans' groups to promote the growth of small business opportunities.

-more-

**Frank S. Beckerer, Jr.**, CEO, **Beckson Manufacturing Inc.**, Bridgeport, CT chosen as the **2007 Family-Owned Business of the Year** for Connecticut. Beckson Manufacturing Inc. is currently celebrating its 51<sup>st</sup> year in business and is in its second generation of management. Fifty years ago Beckson introduced the world's first all plastic hand pump which may be the first "machine" produced in the United States (if not the world) without any metal parts. Beckson has provided generations of employment within the area and has provided lasting memories for boaters and industrial customers around the globe. Beckson is now registered and trademarked around the world and is the parent company to Beckson Marine Inc., Beckson Industrial Inc., Bernard Engraving and Applied Plastic Technology.

**James J. Jackson**, President & CEO, **The Essex Group**, Centerbrook, CT chosen as the **2007 Minority Small Business Champion of the Year** for Connecticut. Mr. Jackson is an advisor to management, executive coach and public speaker, and he and his business advisory firm specialize in helping clients define and achieve their dreams and goals both professionally and personally. Mr. Jackson and The Essex Group help small businesses adapt to the challenges and changes of small business ownership and achieve new levels of business and personal performance. Mr. Jackson designed and is co-facilitator of the "*Side Street to Main Street*" minority small business and leadership development program. This program, sponsored by the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce and funded by a grant from Aetna Foundation has won awards including one from the NAACP over its ten-year history.

**Josh B. Kovner**, News Reporter, for the **Hartford Courant** chosen as the **2007 Small Business Journalist Champion of the Year** for Connecticut. Mr. Kovner has been a journalist in Connecticut for almost 25 years covering local government, neighborhoods, economic development, and public safety. Mr. Kovner has received numerous awards for his expertise reporting throughout the years including a 2006 NEAPNEA (New England Associated Press News Executives Association). In 2002, Mr. Kovner received recognition from the Courant for his story written on the revival of Middletown. He was also a member of a 1999 Pulitzer Prize winning reporting team. In addition, Mr. Kovner is a part-time journalism teacher at Southern Connecticut State University.

**John H. Waiveris**, Owner **Invisible Gold LLC**, Windsor, CT chosen as the **2007 Home-Based Small Business Champion of the Year**. Mr. Waiveris is a computer programmer with 20 years experience and is one of the original founders of a company that pioneered the online classroom market. In 2001, Mr. Waiveris founded Invisible Gold, a company that creates software that makes it possible for a layperson to manage their own websites. The software is highly appreciated by users because it allows small and home-based businesses the opportunity to have an online presence without the budget required to pay a web designer whereby leveling the market. Invisible Gold won the Connecticut Center for Quality Improvement award in 2004 and several of their clients have also won awards in this past year for their websites. Mr. Waiveris also donates roughly 10% of the company's websites to supporting people and businesses that are working to make a positive difference in fields such as clean energy, eliminating world hunger, and encouraging children to be active.

**Carol Wallace**, President & CEO, **Cooper-Atkins Corporation**, Middlefield, CT chosen as the **2007 Small Business Exporter of the Year**. Cooper-Atkins is a leading manufacturer of temperature, time and humidity instruments for global foodservice, HVAC/R, Industrial and OEM markets. Cooper-Atkins now celebrates 122 years of innovative food and safety environment solutions. The Wallace family purchased the company in 1960, with Carol joining the company as President and CEO in 2005. Building on her fathers leadership the company has grown in number of employees from 81 in 2004 to 125 in 2006, and locations, now covering the US, Asia/Pacific/European markets, Mexico, Canada and Latin America. Ms. Wallace's dedication was rewarded when she was presented with the Governor's Leadership Award for her community contribution; promotion of manufacturing awareness; and communication of manufacturing concerns and issues to the public, legislators and community.

A small business awards event will be held in May to honor Connecticut's 2007 Small Business Award Winners. For more information, contact Greta Johansson at (860) 240-4672 or Debra Dillon at (860) 240-4654.

*Small businesses have been essential to sustaining our nation's and our state's economic health. Entrepreneurs and advocates play a vital role in the ongoing business development efforts, and their accomplishments are worthy of recognition. The nomination process begins in September of each year and is coordinated by your local SBA office. Visit [www.sba.gov/ct](http://www.sba.gov/ct) for more information.*

-###-

*A complete list of the 2005 Small Business Week award recipients is attached.*

## 2007 SMALL BUSINESS WEEK AWARD RECIPIENTS

### SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR

*Lorenzo J. Cabrera, President & CEO*

Cabrera Services, Inc.

East Hartford, CT

Nominated by

Robert J. Matthys

U.S. Army Sustainment Command

### REGIONAL & DISTRICT AWARD WINNER

### VETERAN SMALL BUSINESS CHAMPION OF THE YEAR

*Thomas S. Bednarczyk, President & Owner*

Silverlining Partners LLC

Naugatuck, CT

Nominated by

Ed Hill – Electric Boat Corporation

Rose Bednarz – Gateway Community College

### DISTRICT AWARD WINNERS

#### SMALL BUSINESS JOURNALIST CHAMPION OF THE YEAR

*Josh B. Kovner, Reporter*

Hartford Courant

Middletown, CT

Nominated by

Larry McHugh

Middlesex County C of C

### DISTRICT AWARD WINNERS

#### SMALL BUSINESS EXPORTER OF THE YEAR

*Carol P. Wallace, President & CEO*

Cooper-Atkins Corporation

Middlefield, CT

Nominated by

Larry McHugh

Middlesex County C of C

#### MINORITY SMALL BUSINESS CHAMPION OF THE YEAR

*James J. Jackson, President & CEO*

The Essex Group

Centerbrook, CT

Nominated by

Larry McHugh

Middlesex County C of C

#### FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESS OF YEAR

*Frank S. Beckerer, Jr., CEO*

Beckson Manufacturing Inc.

Bridgeport, CT

Nominated by

Ben Thompson

Beckson Manufacturing, Inc.

#### HOME-BASED SMALL BUSINESS CHAMPION OF YEAR

*John Henry Waiveris, Owner*

Invisible Gold, LLC

Windsor, CT

Nominated by

Jane Garibey

Windsor Chamber of Commerce